

Rambling in Lincolniana

LINCOLNIANA is a subject independent of mere timeliness. Interest in the great emancipator is not confined to February 12, or the week preceding that date. Before the writer are two Lincoln books: a new edition of Ida M. Tarbell's "He Knew Lincoln and Other Billy Brown Stories"; and "Lincoln, the Greatest Man in the Nineteenth Century," by Charles Reynolds Brown, dean of the Divinity School of Yale University; also two illustrations, one of which is from the *Columbia Jester*, and the other a hitherto unpublished letter,

which is here printed by the courtesy of Mrs. Rena H. Barickman.

The original of Billy Brown, says Miss Tarbell in the introduction to the new edition of her book, "was still keeping his drug store in Springfield in the 90s, when the writer made studies there for a 'Life of Lincoln.' She passed many an hour in Lincoln's chair, while Billy, tipped back in something less precious, talked. There were Billy Browns in other towns—Bloomington, Princeton, Quincy, Chicago. Their memory of Mr. Lincoln was among the precious and satisfying things in their lives. When business was dull or the day rainy and consequently there were few or no interruptions, the talk you started by questions soon became a soliloquy. Head against the wall, feet on desk, they revived the old friendship. Their memories were tender, reverent, but singularly devoid of the

thing we call hero worship. Mr. Lincoln remained too real to them, too interesting and companionable." Dr. Brown recalls the splendid audacity of Lincoln in an anecdote: "There was a certain measure in which the President believed strongly. He brought it one afternoon into a Cabinet meeting. He found that his Secretaries, to the last man, were

all strongly opposed to it. He spent considerable time in explaining it and seeking to bring them to his way of thinking, but apparently without much effect. The time came, however, when a vote had to be taken. Lincoln put the motion: 'All those in favor will say Aye.' The Secretaries sat there silent. 'All those opposed will say No.' Every man instantly voted a stout, strong 'No.' There came a look of disappointment in the President's face and then a twinkle in his eye. After a significant pause he remarked: 'The Ayes seem to have it. The motion is carried.'

The story of the hitherto unpublished Lincoln letter is as follows: In May, 1858, Joseph Means, a farmer residing near Eureka, Ill., journeyed to Bloomington to attend to some business in the interest of his recently widowed daughter, Mrs. Mary Means Meek, who resided with him. Learning of certain complications involving his daughter's property, Mr. Means, under date of May 3, addressed a letter to Abraham Lincoln explaining the difficulties and requesting advice. With characteristic informality Attorney Lincoln wrote his reply on the reverse side of his correspondent's letter.

The illustration taken from the *Columbia Jester*, speaks for itself. Occasionally such undergraduate publications as the *Jester*, the *Harvard Lampoon*, the *Princeton Tiger*, the *Cornell Widow*, and the *Yale Record* achieve humor of a really high order. The *Jester's* skit strikes the copy reader of limited imagination, but beyond that it carries a message of deeper significance to the Graculines of the world.

Springfield, May 11, 1858
Joseph Means
Dear Sir
The pleasure, my friend, of the
excitement in seeing the laws—
the principles of law, whatever they may be,
is to be found, always, in the law,
if the law can be found, the law
will be no more—This is all that
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